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ABSTRACT

This paper maintains that American thinking on propaganda revolves around five approaches--progressive propaganda critics, media practitioners, textual rationalists, communication scientists, and political polemicists--that all have deep roots in the twentieth century social and intellectual history of the United States. The paper examines the schools and their periods of significant social and intellectual influence as well as dormancy, demonstrating a wide-ranging discussion about the implications for democracy of modern mass persuasion, and providing a broad panorama of ideological diffusion and competition in the United States. The paper's eight sections are as follows: (1) The Muckrakers and the Birth of Public Relations; (2) The Great War and the Furor over Propaganda; (3) The Communication Industry and Progressive Critique; (4) Responses by the Practitioners; (5) Communication Research; (6) The Rationalist Approach to Propaganda; (7) Propaganda and Polemical Competition; and (8) The Return of Progressive Propaganda Analysis. One hundred forty-two references are attached. (SR)

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Propaganda: Five American Schools of Thought

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Propaganda: Five American Schools of Thought

by J. Michael Sproule

One result of the revival of critical media studies in the United States has been the reemergence of propaganda as a significant theoretical term for the study of social influence (Jowett, 1987; Sproule, 1987). Once a dominant rubric for research into mass communication, the concept of propaganda became dormant in academe during the 1950s when social scientists sought a less pejorative expression for their inquiries (Doob, 1966, p. vi; 1982). Today's new terminological turn--or return--presents critics with the unprecedented opportunity for rediscovering a long disparaged but quite rich legacy of American propaganda studies that began during the progressive era.

The legacy of domestic American writings on propaganda elucidates a number of enduring questions in communication inquiry. The continuing dialogue between progressive critics, media practitioners, textual rationalists, communication scientists, and political polemicists raises questions that inhere to the transition of America from an agrarian republic to an urban, mass-mediated democracy. For example, does mass persuasion act to conserve or corrode democratic life? Taken together, the five schools of American thought on propaganda provide a broad panorama of ideological diffusion and competition in the United States.

THE MUCKRAKERS AND THE BIRTH OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Direct mass persuasion became possible during the post Civil War period with the rise of modern communication technology. In the early 1800s, social influence proceeded chiefly through speechmaking and pamphleteering. By 1870, however, persuaders realized that they could more effectively reach the public through newspaper coverage (Baskerville, 1979; Leonard, 1986). Commentators on society were relatively slow to apprehend the implications for democratic life of social influence exerted through the content of news. Notwithstanding the emergence of press agents, whose job was to slant the news in favor of their clients, Lord Bryce (1899, 2:247-374) characterized American politics as involving an informed electorate making its wishes directly known to elected representatives. Orthodox political theory gave no explicit attention to news control and orchestrated propaganda campaigns despite the increasing ability of political and social persuaders to exert an <u>a priori</u> influence on public opinion.

By 1900, heterodox progressives, populists, and socialists

began to cast doubt on the dominant view of America life as grounded in rational democratic consensus. The agitation of these dissident groups for government regulation of the economy alarmed commercial interests, with the result that business increasingly saw a need to speak directly to the public. Ivy Lee, a young reporter, saw an opportunity for journalists to serve as public relations advisers to business organizations, and Lee became one of the first of the modern public relations practitioners. Lee recognized that newspapers were becoming rational economic organizations and that reporters were increasingly interested in professional standards. Lee convinced his business clients that, in the new era of professionalized media organizations, American business could no longer rely on bribery and threats as avenues to good press coverage. During the coal strike of 1906, Lee was able to reverse the policy of press silence that the coal operators maintained during the 1902 strike. The result was to give management, rather than the strikers, control over the public agenda. Lee also persuaded the Pennsylvania Railroad to abandon its policy of blocking news coverage of railroad accidents. He established a new policy of assisting reporters with good facilities, a helpful attitude, and copious handouts (Hiebert, 1966).

Ivy Lee became a spokesman for the incipient practitioner approach to propaganda. Lee denied that the public relations activities of powerful institutions in any way upset the balance of forces in society. First, according Lee, the essential impact of public relations was to make business practices more attuned to public opinion, and therefore, inherently more enlightened. Furthermore, by keeping to their own ethical codes, public relations practitioners would prevent corrupt practices of persuasion. Lee's (1925) personal ethic of public relations included never sending out a "deliberate lie." However, Lee argued that social truth was always relative; no one could ever completely ascertain the facts pertaining to an issue. In like manner, Lee contended, no one could determine in advance what was in the best interests of the receiver of a communications. In a world of intellectual relativism, Lee's remedy for problems of propaganda was to have editors and publishers demand to know the sources of the information and facts they printed.

The emerging practitioner approach to propaganda, typified by Ivy Lee, prompted critical comment from the American muckrakers. The muckrakers were a new breed of social critics who aimed to provide factual, realistic appraisals of industrial urban society. As popular writers, the muckrakers were personally acquainted with the folkways of journalism, and they functioned as press agents of progressivism. Not only did the muckrakers expose corrupt practices in business and government, they were sensitive to how anti-progressive forces increasingly relied upon techniques of modern media influence to maintain their social advantages. Representative of the muckraker's

discovery of propaganda as enemy to reform was Ray Stannard Baker's (1906) essay on "How Railroads Make Public Opinion." This article, culmination of a five-part series on railroad corruption, exposed details of the behind-the-scenes public relations campaign launched against regulatory legislation then pending in Congress. Knowing that "the fountainhead of public information is the newspaper," a group of railroads hired a public relations firm to keep track of newspaper coverage and to visit editors. The firm also sent out self-serving articles, noting when they were printed as news. Avoiding direct bribery, the railroad campaign nevertheless employed economic pressure on newspapers by encouraging local businesspersons to write letters or sign petitions against further regulation of railroads.

Taking the typical muckraker's view of institutional persuasion, Baker argued that public relations practices represented a threat to democratic social influence. Baker argued that the covert nature of public relations prevented practitioners from likening themselves to lawyers in a court of public opinion. Moreover, by its nature, public relations served particular as opposed to general interests. Muckraker Will Irwin later identified two overt dangers to the accuracy of news. First, since "modern business demands mutual favors," newspapers inevitably avoided offending their major advertisers (Irwin, 1911/1969, p. 52). Second, since editors and publishers typically associated with the wealthy and powerful, they therefore tended to assimilate upper class views. Irwin recommended increased professionalism as the route to reform in journalism.

The collision of corporate persuasion and muckraking produced an intellectual ferment from which sprang the earliest two American schools of thought on propaganda: the practitioner school, represented by Ivy Lee, and the progressive school, advanced by the muckrakers. The two schools concurred that twentieth century social influence increasingly would take the form of co-optation of such ostensibly neutral channels of public information as the news. Characteristic of the practitioner school was a treatment of institutional social influence as normal outgrowth of traditional American boosterism and self-advancement. Codes of ethics by practitioners would prevent public relations from threatening society. In contrast, the progressive school held public relations practices to be inherently unfriendly to democracy. Progressives believed that news was tainted by the infiltration of partisan ideologies; therefore journalism contributed to an inherently corrupted public opinion. Progressives saw vigilance by reformers as the only real antidote for twentieth century propaganda, vigilance expressed in muckraking articles in the new large circulation magazines.

THE GREAT WAR AND FUROR OVER PROPAGANDA

Until 1915, matters of propaganda were of significant interest only to progressive reformers and to intellectuals. The propaganda struggles of the Allies and the Central Powers, however, acted to bring news control and covertly orchestrated persuasive campaigns to the attention of the general public. At the outset of World War I, both the Allies and the Central Powers developed propaganda campaigns to advance their respective causes among citizens of the United States, the world's most powerful neutral.

Aiming to secure both arms and a military alliance, Britain set up a propaganda operation in the U.S. directed by novelist Gilbert Parker (Squires, 1935). Parker's propaganda bureau began by providing America's opinion leaders with a variety of pamphlets and publications defending the Allied position and attacking Germany for her brutality and alleged war atrocities. Parker's group further identified Americans sympathetic to the Allied cause, encouraging these individuals to make statements and take action in support of the Allied cause. The British were so successful in covering the tracks of their propaganda operation that pro-Ally Americans did not realize, until after the war, that they had participated in an orchestrated program of political warfare.

Agents of the Imperial German Government, and their cohorts in the German-American and Irish-American communities, realized that their best hope was to cultivate neutralist sentiment in the U.S. Like the British, pro-German propagandists sent out copious pamphlets and also encouraged American opinion leaders to express opinions and take actions favorable to Germany (Viereck, 1930). However, the sinking of the Lusitania in May 1915 ultimately deprived German propagandists of an open-minded public. Further undermining the German propaganda was its close administrative connection with espionage and sabotage. Unlike the English, who kept their propagandists well separated from their espionage agents, the German propaganda cabinet in the U.S. kept close links to covert bribery, espionage, and sabotage. In a series of articles, August 15-18, 1915, the New York World published documents exposing the covert efforts of leading pro-German propagandists. The series showed that the pro-Germans worked "to establish newspapers and news services, finance professional lecturers and moving picture shows, and to enlist the support of American citizens and publish books for the sole purpose of fomenting internal discord among the American people to the advantage of the German Empire" ("How Germany," 1915, p. 2). The result was to make American supporters of Germany, such as George S. Viereck, editor of The Fatherland, appear little more than hirelings of Berlin. German activities, as revealed by the World, set the tone for how Americans first understood modern propaganda. Americans saw propaganda in simple partisan terms,

as expressed in the phrase, "The German propaganda." Propaganda was understood as the use by enemy agents of secret subsidies and bribery to corrupt public opinion through tainted publications.

Postwar disillusionment in the United States set the context for a broadening of the idea of propaganda. The opening of the war archives of the defeated Central Powers provided a flood of secret diplomatic correspondence that contradicted the wartime Allied gospel that the war had been the result of a German-Austrian plot. Accompanying revisionism on the matter of war guilt, the postwar years saw a blurring of the previous dichotomy between presumably truthful Allied persuasion and false German propaganda. Postwar exposes showed that many tales of German war atrocities were exaggerated, mythical, or even faked by Allied propagandists (Ponsonby, 1928; Viereck, 1930).

The end of the war led to a rethinking by American intellectuals and the general public of America's own office of war propaganda. Between 1917 and late 1918, Woodrow Wilson's Committee on Public Information used pamphlets, news handouts, magazine advertisements, films, speakers, posters, war expositions, and every other possible means to present the war as nothing less than America spreading democracy around the world (Mock & Larson, 1939; Vaughn, 1980). While the fighting raged, the CPI's work was seen chiefly in terms of the practitioner view of propaganda. With the nation's economy mobilized for war, what could be wrong with an all-out mobilization of public opinion? After the war, George Creel, CPI head and progressive journalist, continued to use the practitioner's position in defending his work as a wartime propagandist. Creel argued that the CPI program was factual and socially beneficial. Not only did the Committee ignore hate material and atrocity stories, Creel maintained (1920/1972, p. 56), but the CPI campaign proved that "propagandists do <u>not</u> have to lie" (1941, p. 345).

While Creel gave an administrative or technician's view of propaganda operations, the dominant tendency of progressives was to rethink the wartime persuasions. Progressives were troubled by the subtle infiltration of hate and atrocity material into governmental communication. Particularly culpable were lurid posters that portrayed Germans as murders and rapists. Also troubling were the CPI's paranoia-producing advertisements and news features that enjoined Americans to turn in neighbors who made utterances construable as unfavorable to the war. Also important in stimulating a rethinking of wartime persuasions was the idea that the Allied communication campaigns inherently undermined a traditional assumption of American democracy. If propagandists freely influenced the content of news and monopolized the channels of public communication, how could citizens independently obtain the necessary information to make rational political decisions?

Fresh from their respective services with Army psychological warfare and the CPI, progressives Walter Lippmann (1919a, 1919b, 1922) and Will Irwin (1919) articulated the renewed progressive critique of propaganda. Lippmann reflected on Allied censorship and propaganda, concluding that the chief problem of modern democracy was protecting the channels of public communication from propaganda. Without safeguards against propaganda, Lippmann argued, public opinion was "exposed to every prejudice and to infinite exploitation" (1919a, p. 626). Writing of his days with the CPI, Irwin admitted that "we never told the whole truth--not by any manner of means. We told that part which served our national purpose" (1919, p. 54). More troubling to Irwin was the clear evidence that propaganda continued to taint news coverage in the postwar period, notably in biased news accounts of the Versailles Treaty and the Russian Revolution.

THE COMMUNICATION INDUSTRY AND PROGRESSIVE CRITIQUE

Progressive propaganda critique was impelled not only by a rethinking the wartime persuasions, but also by a worry that the wartime pattern of orchestrated social influence would become a permanent fixture of the cultural landscape. Touting their work for the CPI, advertisers now bragged that they could do for business what they did for the sale of war bonds (Lee, 1937/1973). The war also acted as a spur to the new field of business public relations when the CPI discharged cadres of trained publicists. In government, the CPI pattern of official press spokesman and official handouts became standard (Irwin, 1936).

The postwar period saw the growth of radio as a vital new channel of the communication industry. With its audience of millions, radio became a medium of mass communication whose power was not only open to advertisers but also to politicians. If radio was the new voice of key industrial and political persuaders, market research provided the eyes and ears of the communication industry. Market research firms provided helpful data to advertisers on the size and composition of radio audiences (Hurwitz, 1983). By the 1930s, market research firms began to apply their tools to problems of politics. The administrative utility of polls was not lost on FDR, who used George Gallup's data to help steer the nation toward policies of assistance to Britain in her war against Germany (Cantril, 1967).

Propaganda critics focused on the manipulative dimensions of the emerging communication industry. Progressives saw mass communication as giving institutions and interest groups a new ability to influence people before the public could formulate and articulate its will. Progressive critics produced a body of literature generally known as propaganda analysis. Propaganda critics focused less on overt advertising and politi-

cal speechmaking, paying more attention to covert manipulation of the public mind by diffusion of self-serving commercial and political ideologies into ostensibly neutral arenas of public communication, including news, religion, government agency action, entertainment, and education.

Progressives critics returned to the muckraker's theme of tainted news. Led by progressive journalist, Heber Blankenhorn, the Interchurch World Movement published an influential report that criticized steel industry leaders for their effort to falsely characterize the steel strike of 1919 as an outbreak of domestic bolshevism (Commission, 1920, 1921). At the same time, Upton Sinclair published this Brass Check (1919), his personal narrative of how domestic reformers were usually ignored or were given biased press treatment. For journalists caught up in the ideological censorship of the period, Sinclair's work had a great impact, encouraging them to confront and combat obstacles to professional journalism (Grenier, 1972; Seldes, 1984). George Seldes embarked upon his career as a press critic with his You Can't Print That! (1929) and Lords of the Press (1938). In this latter work, Seldes summarized the ideological constraints imposed on news that resulted when great newspaper chains were under direct control of opinionated owners.

Progressive propaganda critics cited religion as a second important source of contamination of contemporary public opinion. The definitive account of the preachers' role in World War I came from the pen of sociologist Ray Abrams (1933). Abrams traced the move of religious leaders from pacifism to war, arguing that the churches contributed much to the hysteria of the period. Abrams described America's preachers as propagandists for wartime state ideology. Particularly ironic to Abrams were attacks by clergy on pacifists and conscientious objectors. Abrams also echoed the prevalent inter-world war view that extremes of patriot utterance and action often belied self-serving motives. For instance, mainstream protestant churches were able to use their pro-war positions as a device for weakening smaller pacifist sects.

Communication practices of government were a third point of concern for progressive propaganda critics. In the years after the Great War, progressives combed government to find instances of anti-progressive propaganda. For instance, Wohlforth (1930) provided readers of the New Republic with a expose of the War Department's citizenship courses given to 260,000 young men at high schools, colleges, and training camps. The army's program warned students of the dangers of pacifism, "mobocracy" (rule by the "masses"), and "socialistic" policies. Wohlforth argued that the army program purveyed an ideology of complacency toward the status quo, stuffing students "with the sawdust of reactionary platitudes, tin-whistle ideals and big business morality" (p. 258). The classic treatment of the propaganda alliance of arms manufacturers and government came in the work of Engelbrecht

and Hanighen (1934), who caused quite a stir with their book, Merchants of Death. The authors argued that arms merchants were an important but often unrecognized part of the system of war. Twentieth century arms manufacturers used public relations techniques to promote war scares that led to higher levels of arms sales.

The rise of centrally-produced radio and films caused progressive propaganda critics to explore whether entertainment was not becoming a fourth channel for covert diffusion of partisan ideologies. Larrabee (1920) observed the covert and overt nature of film propaganda, noting that "theatrical films affect the ideas of those who see them in two ways: first, by their conventional moral standards; and second, by their direct use to convince the audience of the right or wrong of a particular cause" (p. 147). The covert, cultural dimension of film propaganda included making the rich seem more villainous than the poor, and associating crime with use of liquor. Direct propaganda was found in a small percentage of films that took positions in favor of religious groups, relief campaigns, and political positions. Progressives had evidence that commercial persuaders could manipulated informational and entertainment content to favor their products. Teilhet (1931) exposed the new phenomenon of "sponsored films," movie shorts that, under the guise of providing information, actually touted specific products.

Not only did progressive critics fear the overt partisan manipulation of movies, they worried over the general cultural effects of mass entertainment. Of particular concern was the influence of films on the minds of the more than 11 million children under age 14 who attended films weekly (Dale, 1935b, p. 73). Critics pointed out that children were exposed to films originally prepared for adults in which crime, sex, and vulgarity were portrayed as rampant. Moreover, argued Edgar Dale in one of the Payne Fund volumes, movies gave an unrealistic picture of modern life. Dale's content analysis showed that movie characters pursued overwhelmingly personal goals. Dale found that only nine percent of the goals of leading film characters were social in nature (1935a, p. 185). In a companion study, Herbert Blumer (1933/1970) used data from the testimonies of children to explore the effects of movies on the young. Blumer found that movies exerted a powerful "emotional possession" on the young as shown by the nature and content of their reported dreams.

In a fifth foray into the propaganda as ideological diffusion, progressive propaganda critics turned to problems of partisan material in education. Charles Beard (1919) wrote an early expose of how a syllabus circulated by the New York City Department of Education contained disguised propaganda for universal peacetime military service. Two influential articles in H. L. Mencken's American Mercury showed how American college

teachers had eagerly taken on the role of propagandist during the Great War (Angoff, 1927; Grattan, 1927). At about the same time, American became concerned at disclosures showing that the National Electric Light Association had been subsidizing textbook authors to write favorably of privately-owned power plants. Subsequent investigations by the National Education Association (1929) and the American Association of University Professors (Seligman, 1930) widely diffused the problem of propaganda in the schools. During the 1930s, educators explored problems of propaganda inherent in educational materials and prize contests offered to the public schools (e.g., McAndrew, 1930).

Educators of the 1920s and 1930s worked to build propaganda analysis into the curriculum in order to help students function in a world of ideological diffusion. Propaganda became an important theoretical term as well as a significant pedagogical concepts in many fields of the humanities and social sciences. (Lasswell, Casey, & Smith, 1935). Further, propaganda concepts became important in secondary school teaching (e.g., Rosenthal, 1939). The Institute for Propaganda Analysis, chartered in 1937, emerged as the culmination of the anti-propaganda movement of the inter-world war decades. The Institute's monthly bulletin, Propaganda Analysis, enjoyed a wide circulation among the nation's educators and opinion leaders, and the Institute prepared and sold educational materials that were used by adult education groups and by an estimated 1,000,000 students in 1941 (Fine, 1941). The Institute's program embodied the progressive philosophy that education was the most appropriate response to the manipulative dimensions of modern mass communication.

Between 1919 and 1941, the American progressive propaganda critics developed a wide-ranging program of education to combat the problem of partisan ideological diffusion through the channels of news, religion, government, entertainment, and education. Viewing propaganda as a new tool of social competition that posed dangers for democracy, progressive critics gave special attention to efforts at ideological diffusion by domestic and foreign extremist groups and by American business organizations. The progressive view of propaganda was so widely diffused into general public consciousness during the inter-world war years that Americans saw propaganda as the major cause of World War I (Gallup, 1972, 1:192). However, progressive propaganda critique became more obscure during the 1940s and 1950s when social conditions brought into favor opposing perspectives on propaganda.

RESPONSES BY THE PRACTITIONERS

Under fire for tainting public opinion, and thereby undermining American democracy, practitioners of public relations, advertising, radio, film, and polling felt impelled to respond to

their critics. The practitioners were people of action, and so they produced fewer reflective books and articles than did the progressive propaganda critics. Nevertheless, the practitioners were proud of their emerging professions, and they developed a significant body of theoretical literature during the 1920s and 1930s.

Edward L. Bernays, independent public relations counsel and alumnus of the CPI, became the leading inter-world war spokesman of the practitioner perspective on social influence. Bernays contended that the increasing importance of public opinion made the public relations counsel invaluable to institutional persuaders as a mediator who "interprets the client to the public, which he is enabled to do in part because he interprets the public to his client" (1923, p. 14). Taking the view that the public was frequently impervious to reason, Bernays (1923) borrowed from crowd psychology to conceive of the public as suggestible and imitative. However, Bernays (1928) explained, the modern propagandist did not view the public according to a mechanistic stimulus-response psychology. Propagandists understood that members of the public experienced diverse group loyalties. The role of the public relations counsel was to identify appeals that tapped the often conflicting stereotypes held by the public. Particularly important in public relations was the effort to "create news" (1923, p. 183), since news, not editorial opinion, was vital in channeling public opinion. As an example, Bernays (1923) wrote of how he manufactured a news event to save a New York hotel that was losing business due to rumors of its imminent closing. Bernays arranged for the establishment's well-known maitre d'hotel to receive a five year contract. The national press picked up the story, ending the epidemic of cancelled reservations.

Bernays was a communications practitioner of liberal inclination who worked reconcile his profession with America's democratic traditions. Bernays (1923) challenged the progressive critics who argued that covertly manufactured news marked a manipulative threat to democracy. To the contrary, Bernays argued, special pleading was the American way. The U.S.A. operated on the basis of open competition "organized by leadership and propaganda" instead of having decisions be made by "committees of wise men." To deplore the unseen elements that organized mass opinion would be "to ask for a society such as never was and never will be" (1928, pp. 9-18). Bernays contended that modern politics would be impossible without propaganda as a link between leaders and the masses (Bernays, 1928). In this context, the public relations counsel acted more as mediator than manipulator (Bernays, 1923, 1928). Effective public relations was not simply a matter of inducing the public to accept a pre-ordained institutional point of view. Rather, public relations also acted on persuaders, making them more socially responsible. Further, public relations techniques

were available to minorities in society, thereby enabling them to obtain an audience. Finally, just as any other professional group, public relations counsels necessarily developed codes of ethical practice to function in a world of ambiguity and conflict. "Therefore, the public relations counsel must maintain an intense scrutiny of his actions, avoiding the propagation of unsocial or otherwise harmful movements or ideas" (1923, p. 215). Ethics was also good business, according to Bernays (1928), since manufacturers could not deceive consumers without losing public confidence.

COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

Centered outside the academy, practitioners such as Bernays were unable to dislodge the progressive school of thought on propaganda which reigned supreme in academe. During the late 1930s, however, communication practitioners began to form alliances with a new breed of entrepreneurial social scientist. Out of this collaboration sprang a new communication research school of thought in higher education which displaced progressive propaganda critique. During the 1930s, quantitative social scientists embraced the opportunity to hone their theoretical and methodological skills by working on the practical communication problems of business and government organizations. Social scientists first realized significant opportunities for institutionally-supported research during the Great War, notably in the work of psychologists to develop intelligence tests for the Army. Building on this success, a group of 170 psychologists formed the Psychological Corporation to provide institutions with techniques of personnel testing, market research, and advertising testing (Cattell, 1923).

As articulated by political scientist Harold Lasswell, the scientific approach to propaganda accepted the practitioner's assumption that competition of propagandas rendered mass persuasion socially neutral (Lasswell, 1933). Belief in the cultural amorality of propaganda freed academicians interested in communication to eschew a critical scrutiny of messages in favor of studying such law-like aspects of social influence as "under what conditions do words affect power relationships?" (Lasswell & Leites, 1949, p. 18). Lasswell's quantitative approach to propaganda offered the promise of extracting useful meanings from enemy communications during World War II, and Lasswell developed a research program for the U.S. government. During the 1950s, content analysis came to be understood as a quantitative scientific method primarily oriented to "determination of the effects of communications" (Berelson, 1952, p. 15). Lasswell (1951a) wrote hopefully of a new era of postwar "policy science" in which researchers would use their expertise to inform and improve policy decisions.

In addition to Lasswellean content analysis, communication researchers turned to experimentation. At the outset of World War II, the Army set up a Research Branch to bring social science knowledge to bear on problems of military organization. Drawing its personnel both from academe and from leading commercial research organizations, the Research Branch conducted surveys and experimental studies of the troops, as well as some "impressionistic" descriptive analyses by researchers trained in methods of observation (Stouffer, et al., 1949, 1:37-40). A small, though important, aspect of wartime Army social research was the experimental program, directed by Carl I. Hovland. The Experimental Section provided useful studies that tested the effects on soldiers of various training and orientation films, including the Army's "Why We Fight" series designed to inculcate the official view of the causes and nature of the war (Hovland, Lumsdaine, & Sheffield, 1949).

After the war, the Carnegie Corporation underwrote publication of a three volume series summarizing the Army's research program, and these books became the "paradigm of the new social science" (Lerner, 1950, p. 220). The Army researches aided in the diffusion of such individual techniques as the Program Analyzer, which correlated expressions of like and dislike by audiences to segments of program content. Further, the work of the Army's Experimental Section served as the precursor of the much-heralded Yale attitude change studies of the 1950s (Hovland, Janis & Kelley, 1953; Hovland, 1957; Janis & Hovland, 1959). Not that all social scientists favored adopting the Army's research program as a model for the postwar social sciences. Humanistically-oriented scholars, such as Robert S. Lynd (1949) and Alfred McClung Lee (1949), suggested that Army-style social research was likely to produce a trend toward undemocratic social engineering. However, for most social scientists, the work of the Army's Research Branch heralded an unprecedented new era in which social science would play a leading role in national progress.

Survey methods amounted to an important third component of the emerging school called communication research. By the ear 1930s, George Gallup had left academe to found a firm that applied polling to problems of market research, political advertising, and assessing broadcast audiences. Important in solidifying the communication research point of view was the confluence of commercial and academic survey researchers resulting from both the Princeton Radio Project and the earlier-described Army Research Branch. Princeton's Office of Radio Research emerged as a cooperative project of Princeton social scientists, the Rockefeller Foundation, and Frank Stanton's research department at the Columbia Broadcasting System. Later reincarnated as Columbia University's Bureau of Applied Social Research, the radio project produced many important studies of how media generate large audiences and influence them (Lazars-

feld, 1939, 1940; Cantril, 1940, 1944; Lazarsfeld & Stanton, 1944).

The war years gave major social scientists of communication the institutional support they needed to greatly advance experimental and survey approaches to propaganda. Under the influence of the Princeton-Columbia and Army research programs, communication research--the scientific approach to propaganda--became predominant in academic social science, displacing progressive propaganda analysis. Lazarsfeld, in particular, became a spokesperson for the view that media effects were the most important consideration in understanding propaganda. Lazarsfeld and Robert K. Merton (1943) announced that the time for "impressionistic" critical studies of propaganda had passed. They argued that modern conditions required hard quantified data about the effects of segments of radio and film propaganda on specific audiences. Such data were necessary if national institutions were to successfully promote morale and general national defense. Implementing this call for emphasis on the process of managerial persuasion was the demonstration that survey research could unravel many of the mysteries of how people responded to campaign propaganda (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944/1968).

Lazarsfeld and other important social scientists often had reformist inclinations. But they tended to treat their research interests as separate from and subordinate to their desires for reform. Provisions for tax exempt status encouraged this development by mandating that research organizations not engage in activities construable as propaganda or lobbying. Also relevant was the U.S. government's mania for internal security. Both Lazarsfeld and Lasswell found themselves under scrutiny by security personnel for, among other things, Lazarsfeld's having attended a program of the American Writers Congress, which was later cited as a Communist front group (Lazarsfeld, 1954). Lasswell's "offenses" included being in possession of various communist propaganda leaflets which were residues of his early content research (Lasswell, 1951b). The result of these administrative trends was a turn to a scientifically neutral approach to social controversy. Illustrative is the Klapper and Glock study (1949/1954) of newspapers as conduits for charges by the House un-American Activities Committee against Edward U. Condon, chief of the National Bureau of Standards. Arguing that members of the Bureau of Applied Social Research lacked competence to evaluate the actions of HUAC or the truth of its charges, Klapper and Glock provided a statistical tabulation of whether attacks by HUAC led to favorable or unfavorable treatment of Condon in various newspapers.

The 1950s saw the scientific approach to propaganda become predominant in higher education. The neutral appellation of communication emerged as a sign that a "value-free" approach was replacing the old designator of propaganda originally introduced

by the progressive critics. During the 1950s, sundry critical works on communication still received occasional attention (Gilbert Seldes, 1950/1970; Innis, 1951; Lee, 1952; Packard, 1957). But the dominant tendency was for social scientists to study communication as a "value-free" process rather than one elaborative of social ethics. The new-style communication scientists operated from the standpoint of researching ways to help persuaders better succeed in a climate where mass media interacted with personal contacts (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Rogers, 1962/1983).

THE RATIONALIST APPROACH TO PROPAGANDA

Beginning in the late 1890s, Dewey, a leading Chicago philosopher, worked to reconcile traditional logic with both modern society and the scientific method (Dewey, 1903, 1910, 1916/1953). The result was to help initiate a school of thought on modern persuasion that aimed to make readers and listeners more rational by focusing their attention on the logical requirements of observation and inference. While stemming from Dewey's early work on scientific and reflective thinking, textual rationalism, like propaganda analysis, gained currency with postwar disillusionment with the propagandas of the Great War.

Although both propaganda analysis and textual rationalism shared a similar social impetus in postwar experience, the two schools of thought embodied distinctly differing insights into failures of the war years. For most progressives, the major lesson of the war was that institutions could induce the public to a fury of excitement and hate by purveying self-serving ideologies diffused through channels and tools of mass persuasion. Such a view served as warrant for the focus of propaganda analysis on the alliance between powerful institutions and the communication industry. In contrast to the emphasis of propaganda critics on institutional manipulation, textual rationalists took as their mission the analysis of wartime evidences of human irrationality. The Great War's intense hatreds, manias against all things German, and spy paranoia threatened the view of modern society as rational. Academicians such as Dewey, who were committed to a rational or scientific view of life, felt a call to help the public overcome its darker tendencies. Believing that Americans could not be trusted without explicit education in how to think, rationalists developed a curriculum that came to be called straight thinking, precursor to today's critical thinking.

Although sharing concern with degraded public action during the war years, the propaganda analysis and straight thinking approaches to public communication gradually diverged during the 1920s and 1930s. The shift of some progressives away from confidence in the reasoning power of the public is well illus-

trated in the works of Dewey and Lippmann. While Dewey (1918, 1925, 1927) and Lippmann (1919a, 1919b, 1922) paid attention to institutional purveying of propaganda, their later works (Dewey, 1927, 1935; Lippmann, 1925, 1937, 1955) revealed an increasing emphasis on the innate limitations of the public's reasoning power. Consistent with this emerging view of the incompetent public, the 1920s and 1930s saw psychologists, logicians, and educators make important contributions to the literature of straight thinking. The result was a curriculum designed to combat the untrustworthy social intelligence of the people (Clarke, 1929; Thouless, 1932; Glaser, 1941).

The educational methods of straight thinking differed considerably from those of propaganda analysis. As illustrated by the materials prepared by the Institute for Propaganda Analysis (Edwards, 1938), propaganda critics alerted students to such issues as whose interests were being served by communication, how messages were diffused, and what effect propaganda had for society. In contrast, the pedagogies of straight thinking emphasized the assessing of the logical consistency and rationality of message texts. Typical exercises in straight thinking included relating premises to conclusions, testing assumptions, and restraining emotions that might act as barriers to rational decision making.

Before Pearl Harbor, straight thinking amounted to a relatively minor strain of thought in American pedagogy--and one often subsumed by propaganda analysis. However, by the early 1940s, the textual rationalist approach to propaganda became dominant in the American school curriculum. Political as well as pedagogical reasons underlay the shift from progressive propaganda criticism to straight thinking. Propaganda analysis was a method well attuned to post World War I disillusionment as well as to rampant Depression-era criticism of major social institutions. However, two political conditions of the early 1940s worked to make textual rationalism the more appealing education response to problems of propaganda. First, the war with Germany and Japan caused progressives to turn from emphasis on the machinations of domestic elites to an urgent effort to promote national solidarity against fascism. Progressives now began to share the concern, which conservatives had long expressed, that propaganda analysis might induce a dangerous level of skepticism in students. Progressives feared that propaganda analysis might prevent Americans from rallying to the anti-fascist crusade (Smith, 1941; Lerner, 1941). At the same time, progressives began to feel uncomfortable about the quasi-isolationist tendencies in propaganda analysis. For example, the Institute for Propaganda Analysis came under fire for treating the pre-Pearl Harbor communications of Britain and Germany as equally an effort to sway Americans with self-serving propaganda (Garber, 1942; Mumford, 1946).

In contrast to propaganda analysis, straight thinking carried less troublesome overt political content. The focus was on messages taken as ideal types rather than as embedded in social struggle. For this reason, the pedagogies of straight thinking fit the political turn of the times during World War II and the Cold War that followed. In its yearbook for teachers, the National Council for the Social Studies now recommended straight thinking, with a Deweyesque focus on the steps of rational analysis (Anderson, 1942). This turn to textual rationalism marked a change from the Council's earlier endorsement of propaganda analysis (Ellis, 1937). During the post 1945 years, propaganda analysis was overshadowed by such works on critical thinking as that by Black (1952) and the mechanics of the Watson-Glaser test of critical thinking (which had originally been prepared in cooperation with the Institute for Propaganda Analysis). The legacy of textual rationalism continues to the present day. A survey by Nickerson, et al. (1985) shows that 1980s methods of critical thinking usually focus on textual analysis, avoiding wider issues of how powerful interest groups diffuse their ideological messages through the agencies and technologies of the communication industry.

PROPAGANDA AND POLEMICAL COMPETITION

The polemical approach to propaganda, a fifth major school of thought on modern social influence, originated after World War I and became powerful in the 1940s and 1950s. Polemical propaganda critics scrutinize public communication for the purpose of keeping important social forums free from influence and control by their ideological opponents. Polemical writers on propaganda tend to fall into two camps. "Hard" polemicists are active politicians who use criticism as a weapon discredit opposing partisans and thus change the political world. "Soft" polemicists are intellectuals whose more carefully reasoned essays and books are nevertheless closely affiliated with political movements. As contrasted to progressive propaganda critics, "soft" polemicists are less likely to advocate education and professional self-restraint as solutions to propaganda and more often favor direct political action.

The polemical school of thought first became significant during World War I with the effort of the government to suppress anti-war communications. The CPI developed a campaign to combat rumors illustrated by its popular advertisement, "Spies and Lies" (1918). The Creel Committee requested that citizens avoid serving as a "tool of the Hun" by circulating "the malicious, disheartening rumors which he so eagerly sows." What to do? "Report the man who spreads pessimistic stories, divulges--or seeks--confidential military information, cries for peace, or belittles our efforts to win the war." Postwar Senate investigations of German and Bolshevik propaganda by the Overman

Committee (U.S. Senate, 1919) similarly showed that American politicians were concerned by the apparent successes of ideologically anathematized groups in spreading their messages. The Overman Committee used a one-dimensional polemical attack to tar all pre-1917 anti-war groups with the brush of German propaganda in view of the fact that Germans variously approved of and encouraged neutralist sentiment.

The archetype of the "hard" polemical approach to propaganda was the infamous House un-American Activities Committee. HUAC was activated as a temporary committee in 1934 in response to a consensus of Congress that fascist and communist propagandas were a danger to social stability. Rechartered in 1938, HUAC came under the control of an anti-New Deal coalition led by Congressman Martin Dies of Texas. Under Dies, HUAC became more a forum for opponents of organized labor and the New Deal than a body for exposing extremist propaganda. The Dies Committee showed a fascination for dissecting such New Deal operations as the Federal Theater Project (U.S. House, 1938, 4:2729-2873). With an interest in purging the government of progressivism, Dies attacked FTP plays, many of which gave a critical perspective on American economic organization, calling them "straight Communist propaganda" (1940, p. 300).

"Hard" polemical propaganda critique briefly became a socially significant force during the 1940s and 1950s with headlines generated by various House and Senate internal security committees. Notable were the HUAC hearings on communist infiltration of Hollywood as evidenced by favorable treatment of Russia in films produced during World War II (U.S. House, 1947). Joseph McCarthy became the linchpin of polemical propaganda analysis in the 1950s with his efforts to portray the U.S. government as riddled with communists. Since the demise of McCarthy, polemical propaganda critique has lost its patina of intellectual respectability. However, competitive politics insures that distorted polemical attacks on ideological enemies will never entirely disappear.

Distinct from "hard" polemical propaganda analysis, with its flimsy and distorted evidence, is the "soft" polemical critique produced by politically-minded intellectuals of the right and left. For instance, during the 1930s, rightist intellectuals opposed tendencies in modern society toward concentration. Conservative "soft" polemicists exposed and attacked progressivism's ability to gain important footholds in national government as well as in education and journalism. Conservatives such as Elisha Hanson (1935), attorney for the American Newspaper Association, complained of the New Deal's expansion of governmental persuasion. Later, William F. Buckley, Jr. (1951) gained national visibility with his charges that the Yale University faculty purveyed an agnostical, collectivist ideology. Other cultural critiques presenting progressive education as corrosive

to social stability have come from Weaver (1953), Bennett (1984), and Bloom (1987). Rightist humanists also objected to progressive tendencies in journalism. Representative critics include Dinsmore (1969), Efron (1971), and Lefever (1974).

Polemical works by leftist intellectuals also amount to an important social phenomenon. The polemical tangent to progressive propaganda analysis has existed since the days of the more extreme muckrakers, such as David Graham Phillips (1906/1964), and since the anti-advertising attacks by proponents of consumer cooperatives (Chase & Schlink, 1927). Leftist "soft" polemical analysis has taken on renewed significance since the Vietnam years. Prominent instances include the Vietnam-era teach-ins (Martin, 1966), Ralph Nader's attacks on business practices that mislead consumers (Ross, 1973), and Chomsky's and Herman's (1979) thesis of a post-Vietnam conservative effort to reestablish the interventionist cold war ideology that was weakened by the Indochina debacle.

THE RETURN OF PROGRESSIVE PROPAGANDA ANALYSIS

By weakening the value-free ideal in communication research, the upheavals of the 1960s again showed the need for and social value of criticizing powerful institutions. The renewed literature of progressive propaganda studies were pursued initially under such rubrics as "selling" (McGinniss, 1969) and "lying" (Wise, 1973) and were focused chiefly on governmental or political machinations. But following the pattern of the 1930s, the new wave of critical studies began to take as its major point of departure the ideological construction and coloring of news (Crouse, 1973; Gans, 1979; Gitlin, 1980; Bagdikian, 1983). In addition, the new school of propaganda criticism treats the democratic dilemmas of polling (Ginsberg, 1986), and the propagandistic dimensions of entertainment, education, and marketing (Schiller, 1973; MacDonald, 1985; Gitlin, 1985; Postman, 1985).

The rediscovery of manipulation as a key element of social influence has prompted the rehabilitation and reemergence of the venerable term propaganda itself as a master symbol for critical analysis of the communication industry (Jowett, 1987; Sproule, 1987) As Lee (1978, p. 130) notes, the term of propaganda is ever vital because it reminds us that communication functions in an atmosphere of social struggle. As in the 1930s, the renewed school of progressive propaganda criticism includes a curricular response as well as a literature that reaches out to popular audiences. The new propaganda education again has brought matters of ideological diffusion and manipulation into mainstream textual rational pedagogies of critical thinking (Kahane, 1971; Hosterman, 1981; Rank, 1974, 1982, 1984). As in the inter-world war period, many progressive propaganda critiques have attained

large audiences (McGinniss, 1969; Wise 1973).

American thinking on propaganda revolves around five approaches that have deep roots in the twentieth century social and intellectual history of the U.S. Since 1900, the progressive propaganda critics, the communication practitioners, the textual rationalists, the scientific communication researchers, and the polemicists all have seen periods of significant social and intellectual influence as well as dormancy. The upshot of the five schools is a wide-ranging conversation in America about the implications for democracy of modern mass persuasion.

However, for two reasons, the impact of this ninety year conversation about propaganda remains relatively minimal. First, there is a tendency for American scholars to favor one school to the neglect or denigration of the others. For instance, although early progressives identified as-yet-unresolved problems about the communication industry and democratic life, the works of these critics were long described by proponents of communication research as mere artifacts of a flawed and failed paradigm (Schramm, 1971; De Fleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1982). While some have begun to mine the rich legacy of early propaganda scholarship (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1986), contemporary propaganda critics do not ordinarily present their work as a continuation of an ongoing conversation begun by the muckrakers.

A second factor diluting the impact of the American conversation on propaganda is that the literatures of the five American schools are not always understood as related to a common problem, with the result that their overall impact is frequently lost. Few mass media critics would consider critical thinking, polemical propaganda analysis, or defenses by practitioners as providing vital insights to their field, notwithstanding the common historical roots of these literatures. However, taken as a whole, the five U. S. schools of thought on propaganda point out persistent ways that Americans have thought about and have adjusted to the modern patterns of communication. Rediscovering the five schools of thought on propaganda can stimulate the critical imagination of contemporary American scholars.

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